

Says Stem Cell Research is the Hope for Million

**Washington, D.C.** - Rep. David Price (NC-04) met today with representatives of patient advocate groups, researchers, and patients who support federal funding of embryonic stem cell research. Price voted on Wednesday to override President Bush's veto, the first of his presidency, of stem cell legislation. Price said the President's action goes against the majority of Congress and the majority of Americans.

"We're here today because science and compassion were dealt a devastating blow this week," Price said. "The President's first ever veto of legislation has effectively dashed the hopes of millions of Americans who suffer from debilitating diseases."

Proponents of embryonic stem cell research argue that it holds the promise of medical breakthroughs that could help treat and cure terrible diseases such as Alzheimer's, cancer, Parkinson's, Lou Gehrig's disease, multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injuries, diabetes, and others. Price said this promise alone provides a "morally compelling argument" in favor of stem cell research. Price added that he meets regularly with patients, advocates and researchers who are perplexed by the President's stubbornness on this issue.

Earlier in the week, the U.S. Senate passed the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act (H.R. 821) by a vote of 63 – 37, clearing the way for the President's signature. The House passed the bill in May 2005 by a vote of 238 – 194. When vetoing the bill on Wednesday, President Bush claimed the legislation "crosses a moral boundary" and supports "the taking of innocent human life in the hope of finding medical benefits for others." However, many in the President's own party contradicted his statements, claiming instead that stem cell bill was, in fact, pro-life. Republican Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, usually one of the President's most lock-step supporters, said the President was wrong on this issue.

The House attempted to override the President's veto just hours after the event on Wednesday. Although a majority of members voted to strike the veto, the vote failed to garner the two-thirds majority required in the House.

H.R. 810, The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act would require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct, support or fund research on stem cells that have been derived from embryos in accordance with the following guidelines:

- The stem cells were derived from human embryos that have been donated from in vitro fertilization clinics, were created for the purposes of fertility treatment, and were in excess and no longer needed by the individuals seeking such treatment.
- Before the embryos were donated, the clinic consulted with the individuals seeking fertility treatment, and it was determined that the embryos would never be implanted in a woman and would otherwise be discarded.
- The individuals seeking fertility treatment donated the embryos with written informed consent and without receiving any financial or other inducements to make the donation.

Price vowed that the fight will continue on embryonic stem cell research and urged supporters not to give up hope.

"With the legislation we have proposed, there are adequate ethical safeguards in place," Price said. "We cannot let this setback from President Bush be the final word on stem cell research."

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